

21st Century Skills in North Carolina

2008

In 2005, Governor Mike Easley launched the nation's first Center for 21st Century Skills. The



CENTER FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION
IN NORTH CAROLINA

Center, a public-private partnership located in the North Carolina Business Committee for Education (NCBCE), is focused on improving North Carolina's educational system to ensure that students graduate with the skills needed for college, work and life in a global economy. By working actively with business leaders, educators and policymakers, the Center supports innovative educational initiatives that are aligned with 21st century learning and workforce expectations. Examples of ongoing and new initiatives are reflected below.



KEY ONGOING 21ST CENTURY INITIATIVES

1 Learn and Earn

Named among the top 50 programs in the 2008 Innovations in American Government Awards, this initiative allows students to attend a high school located on a college campus, and in no more than five years, earn a high school diploma and finish with two years of college or an associate degree, at no cost to the student. Currently there are 42 Learn and Earn high schools across the state and by 2008-09, there will be 63 such schools.

2 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey

This survey gathers the views of the state's teaching professionals to help shape state education policy, strengthen classroom working conditions and improve the learning environment for students. The 2008 survey received responses from more than 87 percent of the 120,000 teachers and administrators working in the state.

3 North Carolina Graduation Project

This initiative requires high school students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do as a result of their cumulative education. As a first step in helping students to develop ideas for this Project, discover interests and make connections, the 21st Century Skills Center-in collaboration with NCBCE-has encouraged business partners to participate in student job shadowing.

NEW 21ST CENTURY SKILLS INITIATIVES

1 North Carolina Professional Educator Standards and Evaluation System

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) added support for its guiding mission and goals with the creation of the North Carolina Professional Educator Evaluation System and the alignment of public and private teacher education programs. This System is based on the NC Standards for Superintendents, the NC Standards for School Executives and the NC Professional Teaching Standards. The evaluation instrument for school executives (principals) will begin on July 1, 2008. The Teaching Personnel Performance Evaluation Instrument is being piloted and will be phased in over the next three school years pending approval by the SBE this summer. In addition, public and private schools of education within colleges and universities are assessing their teacher and administrator education programs based on these Standards. <http://www.ncptsc.org/>

2 North Carolina Promising New Directions: Preparation for Future Learning (PFL) Assessment

The “North Carolina Promising New Directions: Preparation for Future Learning (PFL) Assessment” is conducting research on the development of assessments that measure how students are prepared for future learning in fast changing environments. Typical assessments tend to tell what students have learned in the past but not necessarily how prepared they are to learn in the future. This research focuses on how students are able to use resources (technology-based access to relevant information, social networks, simulations) in order to learn to solve problems. The goal is to provide more valid measures of students’ existing strengths as well as skills and knowledge that they need to learn. The assessments are designed to provide formative and summative information about students’ progress in developing 21st century knowledge and skills. In a PFL task, students demonstrate their capacity to learn to solve problems by having the opportunity to perform assessment tasks in knowledge rich environments – much like all of us do in everyday life (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999). Gawel Phillips Svihla Vye Bransford (2008).

3 North Carolina New Literacies Collaborative

The Center for 21st Century Skills and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation launched the New Literacies Collaborative (NLC) on October 16, 2007. The Collaborative is a multidisciplinary group of researchers and practitioners who promote research and online professional development for educators in new literacies. Participants include North Carolina, national and international researchers and educators. For the purposes of the New Literacies Collaborative, new literacies are defined as the theoretical and practical intersection of literacy, media and emerging technologies. The NLC conducts research and offers online and face-to-face professional development for teachers in the areas of online comprehension and navigation literacies, Web 2.0 literacies and educational game-based literacies. <http://www.fi.ncsu.edu/newlit/blog/>

4 North Carolina Student STEM Symposium

The goal of the Student STEM Symposium is to make scientific inquiry a valued and enduring part of school culture by encouraging schools to integrate independent STEM research and projects into their curriculum. Student outcomes include 21st century skills such as problem solving, innovation, invention, self-reliance, logical thinking and technological literacy. On April 23, 2008, North Carolina New Schools Project (NCNSP) and the Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM (TIES), in collaboration with other public-private partners, held a day-long student symposium at the Friday Institute of Innovation. Teams of high school students from NC STEM schools presented original, independent projects in science, mathematics, technology and engineering (STEM) to each other. Students and teachers supported the event by creating logos, program booklets, tee shirt designs and student projects. In addition, participants heard from business and university researchers about the purposes of STEM education. “Nothing in STEM is deeper than the belief that we can make the world a better place through problem solving,” said Dr. Louis Rosenblatt, of the Baltimore-based TIES.

<http://tiesteach.org/monographs.htm>

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is the leading advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. The organization brings together the business community, education leaders and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education to ensure every child’s success as citizens and workers in the 21st century. The Partnership encourages schools, districts and states to advocate for the infusion of 21st century skills into education and provides tools and resources to help facilitate and drive change.